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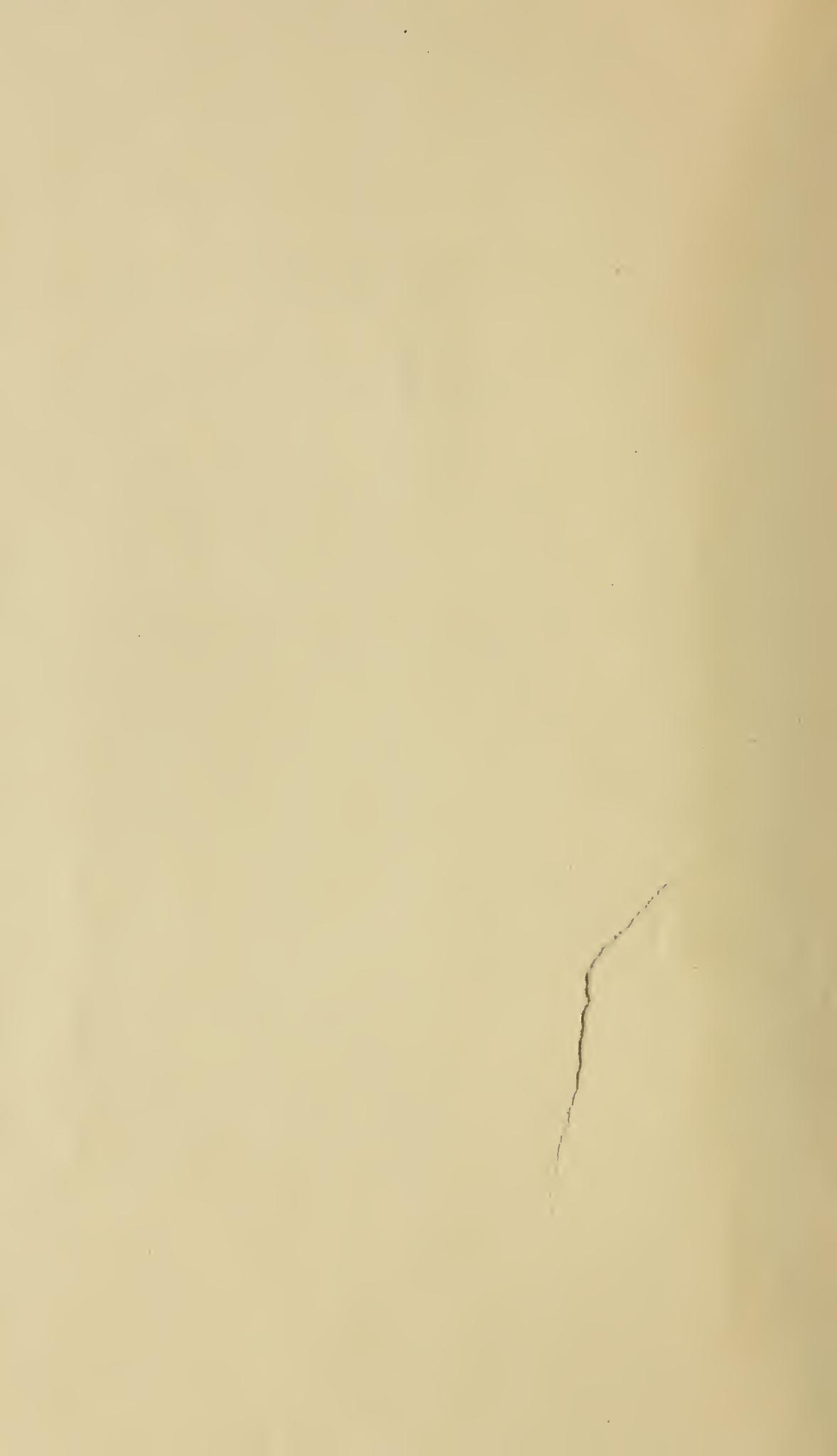
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similar crimes against the person have their strongest roots in the poverty of the majority of the community as measured by the standard of living that has been established by this conference and in the inequalities of our present industrial system and does not originate in an inherent viciousness of those who fall as victims in the strife.

Society reaps the whirlwind in venereal disease, unnecessary blindness, insanity, marital infelicity, divorces, desertions, invalidism of soldiers and sailors, the preventable mutilation of women and men. In truth society pays for its shortcomings, just as the body of the individual suffers from malnutrition, alcoholism and sexual abuses.

An opportunity for the removal of at least a large portion of the burden borne by society lies in a wholesale education of the community as to the relation of the social life and the social evils, so-called. Organizations for the betterment of the masses, churches, schools, labor unions, women's clubs, Y. M. C. As., medical societies must unite in a widespread campaign for public enlightenment upon the problems that are generally termed the sex-problems. The good example set by the various societies for sanitary and moral prophylaxis in stimulating public opinion must be followed. Not the least of this work of education must be in the hands of the physicians who at present are in possession of the most information upon the subject, at least in its physical aspects. The responsibility for the present general ignorance about the entire sex problem in its widest application to the affairs of the world must be placed upon society as a whole that has been countenancing a double standard of morality and refusing to listen to the words of those who have sought to show its error.

In the evolution of the character of a child two large influences are involved: that of the home and that of the companionships of childhood. In the accumulation of information regarding sex, the home as a factor has unfortunately been almost negligible. Parental timidity, or shall I say cowardice, has made it difficult for parents to impart the information regarding reproduction or even the differences of sexes to their children. An unintelligent false modesty has placed the taboo on all references to the development of the emotional and physical side of sex as it seeks for expression at various times in the period of life from infancy to adolescence. The average child of to-day secures the garbled, befuddled, vulgar ideas that he prizes so highly but

A PROGRAMME FOR SEX INSTRUCTION.*

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"The concealment of truth is the only indecorum known to science," wrote Westermarck. In no part of human affairs is this more true than in the veil of mystery that is thrown around the problems of sex and its correlated phenomena.

While it is generally correct that every cause is an effect and every effect is a cause, careful thought will show that the sex problems arise from two fundamental causes. In the last analysis the main problems that are of interest to a conference on charities and corrections arise from a clash of temptation and wills. Society presents one cause, the temptation, through the real social evils of overwork and underpay and delayed marriages, poor-housing facilities with the consequent trials of room-congestion and lack of personal privacy, child labor and the intermingling of children and adults under unnatural conditions and at dangerous times, inadequate opportunity for the expression of the energy of the human species and the train of horrors like dance halls, saloons, boat excursions, family unhappiness and the desire to be somebody and have something that is beyond the daily measure of earnings. All these are but a small part of the ills that can be remedied only through the interaction of the aggregate of individuals that is termed society. This forms the soil from which the sexual weed emanates.

The seed lies within the individual and the fertility of the weed depends upon the essential nature of the seed as gotten from its parents and the character of the soil upon which it is to fall. The will of the individual is the second important factor that demands consideration. The development of the will of the child is largely in the power of the parents. Children are largely what their parents make them, though their character is constantly undergoing changes due to the reaction to environment. This factor of character development may be guided through adequate education for which the parents should be held responsible. The truths pertaining to sex must not be concealed any longer.

It is not my purpose to consider the origin of external temptation save to remark that the White Slave Traffic, prostitution and

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dares not even dream of in the vicinity of his parents from his associates at school, or on the streets, or from the atrocious booklets, issued by some charlatan, that have been placed into his hands for the purpose of creating those false impressions that the child hesitates to talk over with his parents. The home of to-day is largely responsible for the weaknesses of instruction with reference to the development of the physiology of sex and the relation of the individual to the generations unborn.

Parents must come to realize that sex is at the basis of a proper appreciation of many phases of life. The idea of creation as a religious concept is essentially a sex-problem. Biblical literature abounds in allusions to sexual questions that can be appreciated only by the best informed readers. Mythology cannot be read nor understood by the uninformed. Chivalry demands sex knowledge for its comprehension. Literature from the Canterbury Tales to Balzac, Tolstoy, Ibsen, Sudermann, or the novelists whose names are not to be handed down to posterity but whose works are for the multitude of to-day, centers about the relations of the sexes. Plautus, Terence, Sophocles, Shakespeare, the modern dramatists make the most of that phase of life that is so frequently termed the human interest. From the Nibelung's Ring to Pelleas and Melisande, an initiation into the laws of sex is essential in order to intelligently interpret the operas. Art, painting and sculpture, supplies numerous themes that have arisen from the depths of sex experience. All this parents know and still they close their eyes and refuse to see the light or to illumine the path for their children. Parents have a tremendous responsibility to their children and no less a responsibility to society. Parental protection is lost in this field of education, where the relation between parent and child should be the closest.

When should parental instruction begin? When the child first expresses a desire to know as evidenced by a question. At three years, or four or five, whatever the age may be that finds the youngster seeking information from the parent from whom all other knowledge has been gotten for the asking. Whence comes the baby? What a natural query. The usual answer is most unnatural, for the parent fails usually to tell the truth if any attempt is made to reply in terms other than to tell the child to run away as mother is very busy. The child sooner or later takes the unanswered question to some one who will answer it even though the informant is only a playmate who knows little

more about the matter. The first break in the confidence that should exist is thus easily made. At times an evasive or false answer drives the child to seek more light and then the parent is driven back to another falsehood until finally the child's mind grasps the inconsistencies of the replies given upon various occasions or realizes that the parent does not desire to discuss such questions any more. The sense of secrecy arises and then the child feels ashamed of the subject and cannot bring itself to talk frankly with the parent. The opportunity of the child's life has been lost. Henceforth the child must be left to its own devices to ascertain the facts that it wishes to learn, from the playmates, from the gang mates, from pornographic writings, from the charlatan's fear instilling booklet, from misinterpreted dictionary definitions, from posters, lying advertisements, from vicious associates, from cruel traditions and unholy advice, from reading forbidden books and seeing forbidden plays.

Too frequently one hears of the advisability of teaching sex hygiene at puberty. This is too late to begin. The average child of the city has the major part of his sex information, or rather misinformation, long before puberty. To wait for this time is to make the instruction more difficult because the parent who has never spoken to his child regarding the origin of life before puberty scarcely ever can summon up sufficient courage to broach the subject at this time, when the child has also had created the barrier of shame. In addition, the problem is more difficult, because it is necessary to clear the child's mind of the erroneous ideas before it is possible to establish the weighty truths that are to be imparted. Innocence and ignorance are not the same. The so-called innocent child of twelve years of age is well versed in sex-lore. The training in sex hygiene must be begun at the earliest possible age. The crux of the problem lies not in the few lectures that are at times suggested for the high schools and the colleges. Character is too far developed at this age and habits for good or for bad are well established; in fact, irretrievable harm may already have befallen the child. The education must be started at the earliest opportunity.

The public school has long been urged as the proper place at which to have the instruction imparted. As far as the elementary school is concerned, I believe this is an error, as the subject can be better handled by the individual parents for the individual children. The average teacher of to-day is not fitted to teach the subject. The age variations in a single grade, the variations in mentality, the differences in sex precocity, not to mention sex

experience make the teaching of sex hygiene a very difficult problem for the school, even though the instruction is given to the children of each sex separately by a teacher of the same sex. The function of the school is to give children such instruction as cannot be imparted at the home, but instruction in sex hygiene is naturally a part of home training although it represents a largely untried field of parental endeavor.

The school may be of assistance in instructing parents how to give the teachings to their children or in special cases at the request of the parents a teacher might take up the question involved with individual children. As class instruction it seems to me undesirable at present. The school by giving adequate teaching in general hygiene and by affording an opportunity for acquiring some fundamental training in biology will be doing its share in making possible intelligent training as to the laws of sex as they must be interpreted at puberty and thereafter. The entire teaching must be characterized by frankness and honesty. The amount of time now given to the question of alcohol would be spent to far greater advantage were part of it given to the demonstration of the development of plants and animals in accordance with the biological principles involved. Only with trained teachers and adequate text-books will this become possible, and then probably only in the highest grade or in the secondary schools.

And so I am harking back to the home and to the parents. Honesty and frankness, courage and conviction, and the goal of instruction is attainable. The purpose of such teaching in the home is to establish an intellectual morality, not founded upon fear but upon a correct conception as to the relations of the sexes and the necessity of personal purity for the advancement of the human race.

Many will promptly say knowledge will not bring about all this. Possibly not but it is worth a trial. At least parents will be in a position to say that they have at least attempted to help their children develop along the proper lines that make for sex purity. If along with the training in the homes the social causes that go to make the great temptation are gradually obliterated, I am optimist enough to believe that the physical, mental, and moral havoc that now besets us on all sides will be very largely eliminated. Ignorance of the sex responsibilities and the dangers to the community that have resulted must be eradicated.

As a result of an experience covering several years in the actual work of giving instruction in sex problems to classes of

the so-called tenement-house mothers of various nationalities, to mothers and fathers of children in the schools of New York, to social workers, to classes of boys in groups varying in age from nine to twenty-one, to school teachers, my plan for instruction has been evolved along practical lines.

For the purpose of convenience I have set three age periods for which different types of sex instruction must be given in order to secure the best results. First comes the age of mythology; second the age of chivalry; third, the age of civic awakening. Beginning with the child at its earliest age, a plan of sex education may be followed that will result in the maintenance of the confidences of the child and the inculcation of the sex ideals that can be best established through rational sex instruction continuing over the entire life of the child.

The age of mythology constitutes that period of child life that is particularly keen in imagination. It represents the period when the witch and the fairy, Hansel and Gretel, or the giant and the dwarf, the goblins and the elves make the little eyes grow big with astonishment and wonder. Raggylug and all the animal creations are living in the child's domain. The child world is peopled with strange creatures that are most real. Mentally the fairy tale, the romance, the animal story, and Nature wonders supply the best intellectual pabulum. It is the wonder age and question follows question in the pursuit of information. At this time the child is first asking the parent for light as to the differences between boys and girls, where does the baby come from and at the same time is prattling about the mother cat and the baby cats or the kittens. The main factor necessary for sex instruction at this age is the determination of the parent to answer honestly every question that is asked by the child for at this age the child has all to learn. Giving vague or evasive answers only puts off the hour of combat. A correct start having been made there will never again be any hesitation or embarrassment on the part of the parent—the child will not feel confused or embarrassed unless the parent creates such a state of mind through a discipline that makes the child self-conscious. The second necessity is the possession of some fundamental facts that may be interpreted to the child through the medium of story or imaginative tale. The child easily learns the relation between baby and mother. The mother dog and the father dog, the cow and the calf, the horse and the mare and the foal, the lion, the lioness and the cub, the relation of the father, mother and baby soon come to be distinct concepts of the child. The second idea that is

readily absorbed is the egg, and the chick that comes therefrom, and the mother hen that laid the egg. The dependence of life upon the egg seems a large problem for the child to solve, but the youngsters grasp it easily. The third step to be taken is to show the sex organization of plants. The planting of a little oats or grass seed will serve for the lesson. The little green shoots are called the baby oats and the idea of the baby plant coming from a seed is implanted upon the fertile child mind. It is but a short step to show the child the mother plant whence came the seed. The identity of the seed and the egg as the source of life, once appreciated there is a well established foundation for teaching the origin of human life. To go a step further, one can teach the child about the boys and girls that live together within the walls made of petals. The masculine nature of the stamens and the essential femininity of the pistils can be easily explained in terms of plays and games that the child knows. The modes of transference of the pollen and the fertilization of the seed that may be shown always to be in the female part of the flower lays an excellent foundation for the expansion of the sexual themes through the years to come. It must not be imagined that this brief suggestion is to be the work of a day. It must not be forced but should grow day by day and merely for the purpose of enlightening the child without creating any morbid feelings or a craving for unnatural knowledge.

Gradually the child outgrows the age of mythology and enters the age of chivalry. There is no sharp line of demarcation of the two periods nor can any age be given when the transition occurs. The age of chivalry is really a prepubertal period. The child's body is beginning to take on new growth, the sexual functions are beginning to expand, the emotional side is unfolding at a very rapid pace. It is the glorious age of self-appreciation and a time when the child has the largest impulses for getting out to help in the work of the world but can merely dream. The actual expression of the sexual development may be marked by the intensification of affection for the family. Mother, sister and brother are terms that take on a fuller meaning. It is the time that the boy thinks that he really is a man when his mother asks him to take her around the corner at seven o'clock in the evening as her protector. He is a sort of hero seeking worlds to conquer. The blood begins to surge through his head at the reference to one of his feminine schoolmates. The society of girls is desired and their company is sought and the party days are at hand with their dangerous period of amorous games. The

girls are blossoming out into rounded form and their thoughts too are expanding. This is the time of "the lady bountiful." The desire to become a trained nurse, to enter a nunnery, to found an institution for the salvation of unregenerate felines or to be possessed of untold wealth for the betterment of mankind fills the day with joy. It is the age of the romantic walk and the day of looking with rapturous glances at the handsome features of the matinee idol, whose face graces the chiffoniers. It is the time when competition in the battle for favors manifests itself and the parent is accused of not understanding the child's feelings or even life. It is the day of the most dangerous gang life for boys and girls. The desire for independence, the recognition of sex class feeling, the old reticence on the part of parents to talk on the problems of puberty makes the source of information outside of the home. By a system of graduated instruction this period of chivalry has no terrors for the parent. Conversation is frank and confidence is retained and the child is protected from the most malicious influences that are surrounding it at this time of life. The emotional characteristics of the individual child are watched and guided through the mazes of conflicting sensations that attack the child at puberty. The knowledge of plants and animals that has been acquired through observation or by school teaching is all of use in explaining the natural functional phenomena that slowly transform the more or less sexless child into a creature that is sex conscious and views himself as the parents' equal. No attempt is to be made to develop a sexual and sensual child. The light that is shed upon the sex problems in the home banishes the foulness of mind that is engendered by the looseness and lack of intelligent handling of the questions at the present time. A strong appeal can be made upon the chivalric side of child nature. The child can well be made to understand pride in family and self-respect as factors that are to be considered in the daily conduct of one sex toward the opposite sex. The necessity of personal cleanliness, the healthfulness of exercise and outdoor sports must be accentuated. The pernicious influence of smutty stories, lascivious literature, immodest attire, vulgar dancing demand especial attention without laying any stress upon the subjects so as to give them undue prominence as factors in the child's life. Great caution is required so as to avoid the serious danger of arousing morbid desires or stimulating latent feelings that have not yet forced themselves upon consciousness.

The period of civic awakening in turn marks a further de-

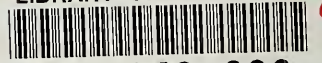
velopment of character. The child in beginning adolescence appreciates that it is part of a community. The thoughts of future marriage already occupy a share of the mental horizon. The understanding of the relation of the individual to the community or the state is slowly coming to play a part in the individual's life. The desire to vote, to have a home of one's own, to take a place in the affairs of the world marks the arrival of the child to a plane of emotions that will enable a parent to make an appeal to the altruistic sentiments. The relation of personal purity to the welfare of the state, the dangers of venereal disease not to the erring youth but to the innocent community or individual as the future wife or children or friends makes a strong impression upon the adolescent. The information that has been given during the previous years of life are recapitulated and again interpreted in terms of duty to the state and responsibility to the community. It is a striking thought to an adolescent to realize that he has a responsibility for the health and welfare of the community and that his personal life has bound up in it the life and health and happiness of many other persons. The argument makes an appeal to the highest motives and the best thought of the adolescent and tends to serve as a keystone to the arched will that has been in course of development throughout the life of the individual.

This program of instruction is personal and established through personal parental instruction. Books are not of much value during the early years of life and often, if given to the children during the age of chivalry do considerable harm because they awaken thoughts for which the child is not prepared. Some of the books are distinctly morbid and tend to give children false impressions that are confusing in the light of their lack of experience with actual sex life. Books may even create a desire for personal experiences that are fraught with danger. Special books in the hands of parents are most valuable for purposes of adequate instruction.

Sex instruction should be undertaken by every conscientious parent. Knowledge is power for good or for evil. The use to which sex knowledge is to be put depends upon the development of the will of the child so that upon the basis of correct instruction as to sex physiology, psychology and purpose it may know evil and right and elect to live voluntarily and gladly a life that will be no menace to himself, his parents, his family or the community of which as a child he is such an essential part.

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